

Message Text

SECRET

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

REF: (A) JAKARTA 0374 (B) BANGKOK 0986 (C) BANGKOK 2895
(D) STATE 016846

1. IN ADDITION TO MATERIAL ON THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIOS
WHICH DEPARTMENT IN POUCHING (REF D), REFS B AND C ALSO SHED
SOME LIGHT ON THAI ATTITUDES TOWARD VIET-NAM AND INDOCHINA.

2. REGARDING INDONESIAN CONCERN THAT BANGKOK MIGHT STRIKE
A SEPARATE DEAL WITH HANOI AT THE EXPENSE OF ITS RELATIONS
WITH THE ASEAN STATES, WE AGREE WITH THE POINTS MADE BY MR.
OAKLEY AND AMBASSADOR MASTERS TO DARUSMAN, OUTLINED IN PARA 1
REF A. BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY TO INDOCHINA AND
ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THAI INSURGENTS BY VIET-NAM, LAOS AND
CAMBODIA, BANGKOK DOES IN SOME WAYS BEND WITH THE WIND MORE
THAN ITS ASEAN PARTNERS. HOWEVER, AS INDICATED IN REFS B AND
C. THE GREATEST CONCERN IN BANGKOK IS A STRONG VIET-NAM.
PARTICULARLY IN THE FORM OF A VIETNAMESE-DOMINATED "INDOCHINA
"FEDERATION". BECAUSE OF THIS CONCERN, BANGKOK IS ATTEMPINT
TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE INDOCHINESE STATES AND TO
ENGAGE ALL THREE IN MEANINGFUL EXCHANGE OF ENVOYS, TRADE
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. BANGKOK ALSO WISHES TO ENHANCE
THAI INFLUENCE IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA AT THE EXPENSE OF HANOI

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AND , AT THE SAME TIME, TO CREATE BONDS WITH HANOI WHICH WILL
LESSEN, RELATIVELY, VIETNMESE INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT FOR
THE INSURGENTS. BANGKOK HIPES TO INDUCE HANOI TO EMULATE
PEKING, AND EVENTUALLY REDUCE SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENCY
TO PRO FORMA ENCOURAGEMENT ON A PARTY-TO-PARTY BASIS WHILE
IN FACT HANOI CONCENTRATES ON WHAT WILL BE ENVISAGED AS
MORE IMPORTANT STATE-TO-STATE FACETS OF THE THAI-VIETNAMESE

RELATIONSHIP.

3. THAI DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE INDOCHINESE STATES DOES NOT, HOWEVER, MEAN A LESSENING OF INTEREST IN ITS BONDS WITH ASEAN. BANGKOK REGARDS THE ASEAN LINK AS A MAJOR ASPECT OF ITS NATIONAL SECURITY AND WISHES TO SEE ASEAN STRENGTHENED. THAI OFFICIALS FORMULATE THEIR FOREIGN POLICY MOVES WITH ASEAN IN MIND. HAVING ACTED QUICKLY TO IMPROVE TIES WITH THE INDOCHINESE, AND PRIOR TO PM KRIANGSAK'S MARCH VISIT TO PEKING, THE NEW PRIME MINISTER WISELY IS MAKING PLANS TO CONFER WITH ASEAN PARTNERS IN THEIR CAPITALS.

4. THUS, ASSUMING THAT ASEAN CONTINUES TO BE STRENGTHENED AND THE ASEAN MARKET ECONOMIES CONTINUE TO OUTPERFORM THE "SOCIALIST" ECONOMIES IN INDOCHINA, WE FORESS LITTLE INCLINATION HERE TO PURSUE AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH HANOI. SUCH A RELATIONSHIP IS NOT IN THE CARDS FOR MANY REASONS. CONDITIONS COULD, OF COURSE, CHANGE, BUT EVEN IT TRENDS FAVORABLE TO THAI INTERESTS CONTINUE IN THE AREA, WE FORESS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT BANGKOK WOULD TURN TO THE UNTRUSTED ENEMY, HANOI, AND JEOPARDIZE ITS TIES WITH TRADITIONAL FRIENDS WITH WHOM THAILAND HAS MANY INTERESTS IN COMMON.
WHITEHOUSE

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